

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3664
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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR KS JA
SUBJ: ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS: YOMIURI OFFICE ORDERED CLOSED.

REF: SEOUL 3608 (030334Z MAY 77)

SUMMARY: ROKG MAY 4 ORDERED YOMIURI SEOUL OFFICE TO CLOSE
BECAUSE OF ALLEGED LAUDITORY REMARKS ABOUT KIM IL-SONG BY
YOMIURI EDITOR ISATO. ACTION APPEARS LIKELY TO FURTHER
DAMAGE CHANCES OF DIET RATIFICATION OF ROK-JAPAN
CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY

1. THE ROK MINISTRYOF CULTURE AND INFORMATION (MCUI) ANNOUNCED
MAY 4 THE THE LICENSE OF THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN TO OPERATE
A BUREAU IN KOREA HAD BEEN CANCELLED AND THAT THE YOMIURI
CORRESPONDENTS IN JAPAN WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE KOREA PROMPTLY.
THIS IS THE THIRD SUCHCLOSURE SINCE THE OFFICE WAS
OPENED IN JUNE 1966. A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE ROKG AND
YOMIURI HAS BEEN BUBBLING HEATEDLY SINCE PYONYANG RADIO
BROADCAST ON APRIL 19 REPORTED REMARKS BY YOMIURI EDITOR
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ISATO TSUNEATSU PRAISING KIM IL-SONG AND HIS REUNIFICATION
POLICY EFFUSIVELY IN A SPEECH BEFORE THE NORTH KOREAN
OVERSEAS CULTURAL LIAISON COUNCIL. THE ROKG HAS REPORTEDLY
DEMANDED THAT THE YOMIURI PRINT ON ITS FRONT PAGE THE
DENIAL IT HAS MADE BY TELEPHONE THAT ISATO EVER MADE THE
REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. YOMIURI DECLINED TO DO SO.
SINCE THE RAMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO ISATO WERE NEVER PRINTED

IN YOMIURI IN THE FIRST PLACE, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE BORADCAST BY PYONGYANG. THE ISATO STATEMENTS ARE ONLY THE PROMIMATE CAUSE OF THE ROK REACTION. ROKG HAS BEEN FUMING OVER YOMIURI "ANTIA-ROK" REPORTING SINCE YOMIURI CAST UNFLATTERING ASPERSIONS ON PRESIDENT PAK'S PLAN TO CREAT A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL IN FEBRUARY.

2. THE MCUI ACTION COMES IN THE WAKE OF A SERIES OF INCREASINGLY ACRIMONIOUS DISPUTES BETWEEN THE ROK AND JAPAN CAUSED BY THE FAILURE OF THE JAPANESE DIET THUS FAR TO PASS THE RATIFICATION OF THE ROK-JAPAN CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT, WHICH WAS SIGNED THREE AND ONE HALF YEARS AGO, AND EXACERBATED BY A RECENT JAPANESE DECISION TO ADMIT TO JAPAN A "PRIVATE" TRADE AND FISHING DELEGATION WHICH IS LED BY A FORMER NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO PEKING AND ALLEGEDLY CONTAINS IN ITS MEMBERSHIP NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THESE DISPUTES HAVE BEEN MAGNIFIED IN THE PRESS, IN PART THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT BY THE INFORMATION MINISTRY, TO THE POINT THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN ON SOME OF THE COLORATION OF A FULL-FLEDGED ANTI-JAPANESE CAMPAIGN. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE RITUAL DENUNCIATIONS BY REPRESENTATIVE PUBLIC SPIRITED GROUPS, WHICH WOULD BE THE CLEAREST SIGNAL THAT SUCH A CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN LAUNCHED. THE YUCHONGHOE, DRP AND NDP HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS WHICH SUPPORT THE CLOSURE OF THE YOMIURI OFFICE, BUT NO OTHER GROUPS HAVE DONE SO.

3. THE CLOSURE OF THE YOMIURI OFFICE IS THE LATEST SHOT IN A WAR OF NERVES WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED LARGELY BY THE

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KOREANS BUT WHICH HAS BEEN AIDED BY GOJ ADMISSION OF THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION. THE KOREANS HAVE BEEN SENDING CLEAR SIGNALS TO THE JAPANESE THAT THE TIMING OF THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION'S ADMISSION WAS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE. CHARGE MAEDA MASAHIRO WAS CALLED IN BY MOFA ASSISTANT MINISTER KIM CHONG-TAE MAY 3 TO HEAR THE LATEST ROKG DEMAND THAT THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION NOT BE ADMITTED ACCORDING TO MOFA, THE KOREANS, RECOGNIZING THAT THE DELEGATION WILL BE ADMITTED, HAVE ALSO INSISTED THAT THE GOJ RESTRICT THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION FROM ENGAGING IN ANY POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHILE IN JAPAN, SO AS NOT TO FURTHER AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION. ACCORDING TO MOFA ASIA BUREAU DIRECTOR KONG RO-MYONG, THE ROKG IS BECOMING CONCERNED THAT THE JAPANESE MAY INTEND TO ACTUALLY ENGAGE IN CONVERSATIONS REGARDING FISHERIES WITH THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION WHICH WILL HAVE STRONG POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND THE ROKG IS PLANNING TO WARN THE GOJ THAT SUCH ACTIONS COULD LEAD TO THE ABROGATION OF THE ROK-JAPAN FISHING

AGREEMENT OF 1965.

4. WE HAVE READ THE TEXT OF THE MCUI ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ISATO AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS AND THE REMARKS CITED ARE THE STANDARD LAUDATORY PAP THAT NORTH KOREA ATTRIBUTES TO EVERY FOREIGN VISITOR. WE HAVE A UNC REPORT THAT KCIA DIRECTOR KIM CHAE-KYU TTIRED TO WARN KIM SONG-CHIN AWAY FRO CLOSING THE YOMIURI OFFICE BACAUSE OF THE KCIA REPORT.

THE KCIA CHIEF'S EMISSARY REPORTEDLY TOLD THE INFORMATION MINISTER THAT IT WOULD NOT BE A PLUS FOR THE ROK IF YOMIURI SHOULD BE KICKED OUT OF SEOUL ONLY TO OPEN A BUREAU IN PYONGYANG. KIM SONG-CHIN REPORTEDLY SAID HE HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT.

5. UNFORTUNATELY, KIM SONG-CHIN HAS NOW CREATED AN INCIDENT WHICH WILL CATCH THE EYE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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JAPANESE PRESS AND CAUSE UNPLEASANT PUBLICITY FOR THE ROK WHILE THE CONTINELTAL SHELF AGREEMENT IS STILL BEING DEBATED. THIS WILL PROBABLY DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE JAPANESE ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE TO THE ULTIMATE DETRIMENT OF THE ROK. THE TIMING COULD HARDLY BE WORSE.

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